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ABSTRACT

Bridge Builders is a 2-year program intended to develop leadership in high school students. Programmatic goals include enhancing the participants' understanding of other racial and ethnic groups, socioeconomic groups, gender awareness, social responsibility, and the value of community service. Bridge Builders participants confronted community problems such as racial discrimination, homelessness, educational inequity, drug abuse, and poverty. These young leaders are expected to influence others in their schools and communities. Their awareness of and commitment to solving community problems should produce lasting benefits for the society. A survey of former participants (N=151) was conducted to study the impact of the program over its 10-year history. Attitudes of participants with regard to leadership, community service, communications, human relations, and Bridge Builder activities were studied. A set of seven questions inviting comments was also included. A data analysis is provided with demographics, descriptive data on questions, and analysis by gender, race, age, education, and period of involvement. Differences by current vocation (job category) are presented. Answers to the qualitative questions are discussed, and conclusions presented. Overall the program was seen as effective; however, many suggestions for improvements were reported. Recommendations are listed. Includes letter and instrument used to gather data. (Contains 12 tables.) (EMK)

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Evaluation of the Bridge Builders Program: Students Involved in Multicultural Activities

John R. Petry and Herbert L. McCree

The University of Memphis

Presented at the
Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting
Mid-South Educational Research Association

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Introduction

Bridge Builders, a youth leadership program administered by Bridges, Inc. of Memphis, Tennessee (formerly Youth Service in Memphis), began in 1988 with 40 students and has trained approximately 1300 young men and women since its inception. Participants have been chosen during their sophomore year in high school based on nominations from school faculty who have seen them demonstrate leadership potential in their respective schools, which are both public and private. Efforts have been made made to include students who represented a diversity of racial, economic, and cultural backgrounds. The shared common characteristic sought was the ability to lead others.

The program was begun with a week-long residential training session hosted by a local university. Students were placed in group settings and exposed to experiences that were designed to develop new cross-cutting groups (HBMCE 36). The experiences these groups received were designed to achieve three essential elements needed for teamwork and understanding: (1) equal footing, (2) common goal, and (3) institutional support (HBMCE 36).

Programmatic goals included an enhancement of the participants: the understanding of other racial/ethnic groups, socioeconomic groups, gender awareness, social responsibility, and the value of community service. The accomplishment of these goals was dependent on the quality of the total program, which covered two years of community service projects, monthly seminars, and a second summer session at the university.

Bridge Builders participants confronted such community problems as racial discrimination, homelessness, educational inequity, drug abuse, and poverty. It was intended that these young leaders return to their respective schools and communities to influence the thinking and actions of their peers. Their commitment to solving community and social problems and their awareness of them would have produced lasting beneficial changes beyond the confines of their individual settings.

The program has endeavored to "provide youth with skills for leadership during two camp experiences and 18 monthly meetings using adventure education and classroom experiences," "expose youth to cultures which differ significantly from their own, using adventure education classroom activities, and diverse pairing of roommates," "expose youth to community needs by active participation in 10 community service projects," and "place youth in summer employment programs during college years."

Its outcomes were seen to be "young adults who will show proficiency in leadership skills," "young people who progress in their understanding, tolerance, and appreciation of differences of race, gender, and culture," "young people who become

involved in solving community problems," and "young people who demonstrated the skills to solve problems in their communities."

The desired impacts of the program were "community and business leaders who make decisions based on an understanding and appreciation of different cultures" and "community and business leaders who are able to work or serve in a diverse community environment."

Methodology

In an attempt to determine the impact of the Bridge Builders program over its ten-year history (1988-97), a survey of the former participants was conducted to ascertain their opinions of the effect of the program on their lives. Personnel from The University of Memphis met with members of the Bridges staff to discuss what data should be sought through the survey. It was decided to examine the attitudes held by past participants regarding five areas that were historically related to the program content: (1) leadership, (2) community service, (3) communications, (4) human relations, and (5) Bridge Builder activities. A questionnaire utilizing Likert-scaled items was developed to address issues from these five areas and to collect demographic data. Additionally, a set of questions asking for comments was included to enhance the data collected from the questionnaire and to provide a qualitative glimpse at participant thoughts.

The University of Memphis personnel created a draft of an instrument that was shared with Bridges staff and a few former participants in order to obtain their reactions. After modifications, including the deletion of some items and the addition of others, the instrument was sent to 12 former participants for their reactions, which were generally favorable. Following minor changes, the instrument was distributed to 900 of the former 1200 participants, who were sent a letter asking them to respond to the 30-item Bridge Builders Impact Questionnaire, which consisted of sections on demographic data (items 1-8), the effect of the program on the respondent (items 9-23), and written comments to specific questions (items 24-30). After a three-week period, a postcard was sent reminding them of the opportunity to respond. The correspondence resulted in 151 responding to the questionnaire. Both types of answers, on bubble sheets and written comments, were submitted anonymously by the respondents and remained so throughout the project.

Characteristics of the Respondents

The 151 respondents represented 16.77% of the number of surveys sent out, 13.39% of the total enrolled in the ten-year program period (N=1127). Of the 151 respondents, 115 (76.2%) were female; 36 (23.8%) were male. By race, 76 (50.3%) were European-American, 55 (36.4%) were African-American, 10 ((6.6%) were Asian-American, 4 (2.6%) were Native-American, 1(.7%) was Hispanic-American, and 5 (3.3%) gave no indication of race. By age, 98 (64.9%) were from 17-20 years old, 49 (32.5%) were from 21-25 years old, 2 (2.0%) were over 25 years old, and 1 (.7%) gave no indication of age. By education, 8 (5.3%) were still in high school, 118 (78.1%) had

had some college experience, 24 (15.9%) were college graduates, and 1 case (.7%) was missing. By education, 34 (22.5%) were in the program from 1988-92, 116 (76.8%) from 1993-97, and 1 case (.7%) was missing. By vocation, 22 (14.6%) were in a medical field, 18 (11.9%) were in business, 18 (11.9%) were in education, 53 (35.1%) were in other vocations, and 40 (26.5%) did not respond to the item.

Data Analysis

General Descriptions of Item Questions

The following table shows means and standard deviations for questions 9 through 23. The column labeled "Rank" reports the ordering of the means from lowest (1) to the highest (15).

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Rank for Questions 9-23

Question	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank
Q9	3.57	1.08	4
Q10	3.89	1.08	8
Q11	3.80	.10	6.5
Q12	3.33	1.25	2
Q13	3.91	1.05	9
Q14	3.41	1.33	3
Q15	3.95	1.05	11
Q16	3.92	.98	10
Q17	4.00	1.00	12
Q18	4.06	.93	13
Q19	4.07	1.00	14
Q20	3.77	1.16	5
Q21	4.12	1.00	15
Q22	3.27	1.30	1
Q23	3.80	1.10	6.5

There were no questions in which the average was below neutral. For the most part, responses tended to be left-handedly skewed, meaning that the majority of the responses tended to be from "Neutral" to "Great Effect." The highest positive response was for question 21,"To what extent did Bridge Builders activities help you understand teamwork?" followed by question 19,"To what extent has your willingness to interact with people increased?" then question 18,"To what extent were you able to overcome stereotypes of other racial groups?"

Assessment of Questions by Demographics

The following analysis investigated the differences between demographic responses (gender, race, age, education, vocation, and period in the program) for the response questions (questions 9 through 23). Independent (grouped) t-tests were performed to assess the mean differences between demographic questions. When there were more than two categories of a variable, the two most frequently response categories were used and one way analysis of variance was performed.

Analysis by Gender

The table below shows that there were no differences between males and females for any of the Likert-based questions:

Table 2. T-tests for Gender

Question	t-ratio	Tail Probability
Q9	-.43	.208
Q10	-1.20	.231
Q11	.32	.750
Q12	-1.03	.304
Q13	.55	.583
Q14	-.62	.534
Q15	-.48	.630
Q16	-.80	.427
Q17	-.85	.395
Q18	-.64	.522
Q19	-.17	.863
Q20	-.67	.505
Q21	-1.16	.248
Q22	-.17	.863
Q23	-.68	.495

Analysis By Race

Because of the low responses for racial categories other than African American and European Americans, analysis was performed just on those two categories using the independent t-test. Variances of responses were statistically equal between the two groups; therefore, only pooled variance estimate t-tests are reported.

There were many significant effects when assessing the differences of the questions by race. Significant differences were found for questions 12 ("To what extent was your community involvement increased by Bridge Builders?"), 13 ("To what extent did your overall ability to interact with others effectively improve?"), 15 ("To what extent

did your participation in Bridge Builders improve your leadership skills?"), 17 ("To what extent did Bridge Builders activities help all individuals develop a common goal?"), 19 ("To what extent has your willingness to interact with people form other groups increase?"), 21 ("To what extent did Bridge Builders activities help you understand teamwork?"), and 23 ("To what extent were your views about leadership affected by Bridge Builders?"). In each of these questions, African Americans reported significantly higher means than European Americans. This is to say that, for these questions, African Americans felt a more positive effect.

Table 3. T-tests for Race

Question	t-ratio	Tail Probability
Q9	1.07	.287
Q10	2.03	.044*
Q11	1.78	.077
Q12	2.17	.032*
Q13	2.36	.020*
Q14	.49	.140
Q15	2.24	.027*
Q16	-.09	.926
Q17	2.12	.036*
Q18	1.83	.069
Q19	2.21	.029
Q20	1.66	.100
Q21	3.16	.002*
Q22	1.53	.127
Q23	3.46	.001*

* Significant at .05 level

In the table of means below, standard deviations are within parentheses:

Table 4. Means for Race

Question	African Americans	European Americans
Q12	3.58 (1.197)	3.10 (1.271)
Q13	4.16 (.938)	3.74 (1.075)
Q15	4.17 (.863)	3.75 (1.156)
Q17	4.17 (.863)	3.79 (1.087)
Q19	4.24 (.889)	3.84 (1.096)
Q21	4.38 (.733)	3.84 (1.103)
Q23	4.13 (.991)	3.47 (1.130)

For each of the above questions, European Americans responded between "Neutral" to "Reasonable" impact. African Americans, however, reported significantly higher impact averages. They reported, on average, higher than "Reasonable" effects.

Analysis by Age

For this analysis, age categories 17-20 and 21-25 were used to assess differences for questions 9 through 23. There were only three subjects who reported being over 25, too few to include in statistical testing procedures.

Table 5. T-tests for Age

Question	t-ratio	Tail Probability
Q9	3.23	.002*
Q10	.77	.443
Q11	.56	.577
Q12	1.52	.130
Q13	.89	.376
Q14	1.20	.233
Q15	1.94	.054
Q16	1.67	.097
Q17	1.18	.238
Q18	.74	.460
Q19	.46	.646
Q20	2.41	.017*
Q21	1.14	.258
Q22	-1.06	.292
Q23	1.52	.131

* Significant at the .05 level

Significant differences between age categories were found for question 9,"To what extent do you seek social contact with people of other races?" and question 20,"To what extent did you develop friendships with those of other racial groups?" No significant differences were found between age categories for the other questions.

Table 6. Means for Age

Question	Ages 17-20	Ages 21-25
Q9	3.67 (1.10)	3.08 (.895)
Q20	3.92 (1.11)	3.42 (1.155)

The younger age group (17-20) reported more of an impact on seeking social contact (question 9) than the older group. Similarly, the younger age group reported higher impact for developing friendships (question 20).

Analysis By Education

Because of the low responses to the education category "High School" (n=8), only independent t-tests were performed for the categories "Some College" and "College Graduate."

Table 7. T-tests for Education

Question	t-ratio	Tail Probability
Q9.	.64	.522
Q10	-.79	.433
Q11	.27	.786
Q12	.35	.725
Q13	.27	.784
Q14	-.06	.950
Q15	-.60	.551
Q16	1.09	.278
Q17	1.30	.195
Q18	1 15	.250
Q19	1.39	.166
Q20	1.69	.093
Q21	.05	.963
Q22	.23	.821
Q23	.46	.647

There were no questions in which the average responses differed by educational levels.

Analysis by Period

This section reports the difference between those reporting either 1988-1992 or 1993-1997 as the period of their involvement. The statistical method of choice was the independent t-test, which revealed differences for questions 9 ("To what extent do you seek social contact with people of other races?"), 12 ("To what extent was your community involvement increased by Bridge Builders?"), 17 ("To what extent did Bridge Builders activities help all individuals develop a common goal?"), 20 ("To what extent did you develop friendships with those of other racial groups?"), 21 ("To what extent did Bridge Builders activities help you understand teamwork?"), and 23 ("To what extent were your views about leadership affected by Bride Builders?").

Table 8. T-tests for Period

Question	t-ratio	Tail Probability
Q9.	-2.35	.020*
Q10	-1.15	.252
Q11	.49	.627
Q12	-2.40	.017*
Q13	-1.28	.204
Q14	-1.93	.055
Q15	-1.76	.081
Q16	-1.82	.070
Q17	-2.88	.005*
Q18	-.58	.561
Q19	-1.57	.119
Q20	-2.46	.015*
Q21	-2.57	.011*
Q22	-1.81	.072
Q23	-2.11	.036*

* Significant at .05 level

The following table reports means and standard deviations for significant differences for the questions cited above:

Table 9. Means for Significant Differences

Question	1988-1992	1993-1997
Q9	3.12 (.781)	3.61 (1.125)
Q12	2.88 (1.25)	3.46 (1.122)
Q17	3.56 (.99)	4.11 (.985)
Q20	3.35 (1.228)	3.90 (1.10)
Q21	3.72 (1.04)	4.22 (.961)
Q23	3.44 (1.162)	3.90 (1.066)

From the above table one can conclude that there was a significant increase of the responses for the above questions between the first and second time periods.

Testing Difference by Job Category

The following table is a frequency distribution of job vocations:

Table 10. Job Vocations by Number and Percentage

Vocation	Number	Percentage
Business	18	11.8
Clergy	2	1.3
Communications	7	4.6
Education	18	11.8
Entertainment	2	1.3
Government	2	1.3
Industry	3	2.0
Law	4	2.6
Medicine	22	14.5
Social Work	6	3.9
Other	3	2.0
Other profession	25	16.4
None	37	24.3

The most frequently occurring job vocations were used to test the mean differences as measured by the Likert-type questions. One way analysis of variance was used to test average differences for those reporting "Business," "Education," "Medicine," "Other profession" and "None." LSD, or least significant differences, *post hoc* procedures were performed on significant ANOVA F-ratios.

Table 11. F-ratios and Their Significance for Questions 9-23

Question	F-ratio	Tail Significance
Q9	1.01 (4,114)	.402
Q10	1.62 (4,114)	.172
Q11	1.15 (4,114)	.336
Q12	.54 (4,115)	.709
Q13	2.63 (4,115)	.037*
Q14	.73 (4,115)	.577
Q15	.84 (4,115)	.503
Q16	.89 (4,115)	.475
Q17	.19 (4,115)	.942
Q18	2.54 (4,115)	.044*
Q19	2.16 (4,115)	.071
Q20	1.31 (4,114)	.271
Q21	1.44 (4,115)	.227
Q22	.99 (4,115)	.415
Q23	1.19 (4,114)	.399

*Significant probability at the .05 level. Degrees of freedom are within parentheses.

The following is a table of means for the significant F-ratios on questions 13 ("To what extent did your overall ability to interact with others effectively improve?" and 18 ("To what extent were you able to overcome stereotypes of other racial groups?"):

Table 12. Means for Significant Results

Question	Mean (Std. Dev.)
Q13	
Business	3.94 (.998)
Education	4.50 (.618)
Medicine	3.82 (1.14)
Other profession	4.12 (1.01)
None	3.59 (1.14)
Q18	
Business	4.22 (.878)
Education	4.39 (.698)
Medicine	4.04 (.950)
Other profession	4.16 (.851)
None	3.71 (.845)

The only two significant effects, questions 13 and 18, were found in assessing differences between vocation and the item questions. Post-hoc analysis was performed to assess the mean differences for those two variables. For question 13 ("To what extent did your overall ability to interact with others effectively improve?"), the LSD (Least Significant Difference) range test revealed significant mean differences for three categories. "Education" (m=4.5) was significantly higher than "Medicine" (m=3.82), and "Education" (m=4.5) was significantly higher than "Other profession" (m=3.59).

For question 18 ("To what extent were you able to overcome stereotypes of other racial groups?") post-hoc analysis showed that those who had stated no profession (m=3.71) had a significantly *lower* response than those who reported "Business" (m=4.22), "Education" (m=4.39), and "Other profession" (m=4.16). The aforementioned professions declared more of a positive impact than those who had no profession.

Analysis of Comments

The comments of the respondents were provided in answers to seven questions posed about the effectiveness of the program on the former participants. The questions came from lists that related to the five areas mentioned above. They were arranged in

random order, having been included after being reviewed by Bridge Builders staff members, former participants, and University of Memphis research personnel. Comments were used to compose the text. Most responses were singular, and most are included in this report.

24. How were your views of racial problems in Memphis affected?

When asked the question, "How were your views of racial problems in Memphis affected?" the majority of the respondents answered positively; answers ranged from a drastic change to a much less positive effect. For instance, they found that there were more problems than they were aware of, and in some instances they concluded that everyone was capable of working together and solving them and that people could come together and work towards common goals. Some attention was given to p solving problems personally. At least one person became aware of specific areas that needed to be improved as opposed to one large, unsurmountable problem with no solution in sight. It was contended that Memphis was seen as being divided by a line defined by race and gender but that these factors could also be overcome by each individual. For another respondent, Bridge Builders presented problems that existed and gave tools and relationships to confront them on a personal level. Awareness of numerous small problems and their severity was mentioned. The knowledge of how to overcome and overlook the past in order to move ahead was important to at least one person.

Race and racism were mentioned by some, who commented that racial problems were caused by previous generations, that the racial problems were not stemming from children, but from adults. Racial problems were considered to be ever present in Memphis, and views about them were clarified in group discussions where solutions were discussed. Bridge Builders helped them to realize that the answer to racial problems in Memphis was to promote understanding among different individuals and made them realize the need to work harder in Memphis to effect racial harmony.

Bridge Builders showed at least one that there was hope. Another saw how much Memphis really needed a program like Bridge Builders. For another, Bridge Builders helped to break down the problems, find a common goal, and overcome stereotyping and prejudice to solve them. Bridge Builders also helped to relieve tension in the community. It was considered to be an ideal setting for realizing that problems existed. For another, it was confirmed that all races could work together to reach a common goal.Racism was considered to be pointless and ridiculous by one answerer.

For some, Bridge Builders helped participants to overcome racial problems, to look past them so that all could move forward, to gain an open mind about how races were looked at, and to personalize issues. Others were optimistic about problems being confined only to some groups, not involving all persons in the city.

To a few, racial situations were negative. The formation of racial lines within Bridge Builders was disheartening to one: it was the citywide problem on a smaller scale.To another, no matter how much an attempt was made to integrate Memphis, it would always be segregated in some ways. Another said that there was an extensive

amount of "southern pride" lingering that caused a large degree of racism. There was a degree of defeatism in one response in that nothing had changed from the 50's and 60's. Not necessarily that negative was the observation that there was an over emphasis on the differences between the races and cultures.

Some stated that the program did not affect their views at all, partially because they had not been affected by racial problems or exposed to them before they participated in Bridge Builders. One regretted the lack of interaction by participants. To another, the program reemphasized what was already known. For others, segregation still existed, and Memphis was bicultural, not multicultural, being politically divided by racial loyalty.

25. What about Bridge Builders produced the most positive and longest lasting effect on your life?

The major response to the question, "What about Bridge Builders produced the most positive and longest lasting effect on your life?" was that working with others, especially in groups, helped some to realize that they could not accomplish everything individually. Working together, especially through community service, brought together everyone's strengths and problem solving skills. Some were impressed by the cooperation and positive attitudes expressed toward every situation. People worked toward common goals that were eventually reached. Communication within a group was seen as the key to accomplishment. Honesty in the sessions was appreciated. A desire to serve the community increased.

Trust was another effect of the program: trust in others, the trust of others in groups and teams; the leadership and the trust games; friendship with a roommate; and long-lasting friendships. Working as a team aided in learning how to work with classmates and co-workers.

The development of leadership skills was another positive result. Respondents stated that Bridge Builders experiences helped them to become leaders as well as followers (such as by working with homeless children), and gave to the participants a sense of direction with the leadership skills that were brought out. They learned to be positive, patient, more assertive, and outgoing.

Another area of note was involvement in service projects, visiting a housing project being the most memorable experience to one. Another person stated that "Interacting with the children and seeing that they were curious but accepting convinced me that Memphis' social, racial, and economic gaps are not unbridgeable." Visits to several different sites were mentioned as being meaningful.

Concerning the program format, there was approval, one saying that the discussions were inspirational and helpful, and that there was a desire not to want them to stop. The entire program and experience was liked by others, as were the training weeks during summer. There was an appreciation for the camp both years and the challenges that persons were called on to do, that is, to try things not normally done, such as speak up in large groups, participate in the outdoor experiences, and work in team exercises.

Many respondents used the word "taught" to express their opinions: taught to

look past socioeconomic differences and concentrate on the similarities; taught perseverance; taught to be a leader, communicator, and a positive person; and taught never to judge people by culture or color.

Several referred to race: there was more awareness of stereotyping, and along with it discouraging others to stereotype because everyone was considered to have her/his own idiosyncrasies regardless of race; the valuing of a personal contact with people of a different race, thus getting to know them; relationships built with persons of other races; the idea that there was an attempt to help solve the race problem in Memphis; the need to understand each other; and the need to be color-blind.

For two commenting about this question, Bridge Builders did not leave a good impression.

26. To what extent were your hopes for the future of Memphis affected?

Reactions to the question, "To what extent were your hopes for the future of Memphis affected?" ranged from optimism to pessimism. Those who most strongly felt that there is hope for Memphis gave unqualified comments. No more than three felt that the future lies in the hands of the youth, the Bridge Builders and the continued existence of the program, and, therefore, a group of Memphis students who could help clear up problems: "I believe that if we, the teenagers could run the city there would be better racial relationships in the city and maybe even one day there would be no racism." To one, the future would be brightened because of the quality, dedication, and determination of the students involved

Bridge Builders would be a vehicle through which hopes would be enhanced and elevated because Bridge Builders was looked upon as: strengthening Memphis through its members, focusing on the present as well as on the future, and providing ideas to solve Memphis' problems. The situation was looked upon as a challenge to the younger generation and that their staying in Memphis would provide a means of achieving a harmonious future.

Solutions to many problems were seen as being reached through education, communication, and understanding. There was a lot of hope expressed if people were willing to participate in making situations better, but there was a long way to go. One person felt good about some aspects of the problems but that the media and tradition tended to keep the problems where they were--unsolvable.

Hopes for the city included that the city put aside petty personal problems and work as a team for the good of everyone; that more Memphians be less judgmental; that Memphis become less stereotypical; that diversity be stressed; and that the focus not be on Memphis but on the schools and social environment.

Pessimism, however, was prevalent in many comments: "initially, hopes were raised, but today they have diminished"; "Memphis is more hopeless than I originally suspected"; "only God can help this confused city"; "I hope that relations will not continue to be this strained and tense"; and "Memphis does not accept all cultures." There was a glimmer of hope in one response: "can't change Memphis, but can make small differences." There was a feeling that the Bridge Builder group did not represent the community, that there was a small number of people in Bridge Builders, and that

Memphis needed every student to experience this program even though it would be prove to be an impossibility.

Another did not think that the Bridge Builders program affected Memphis, that if it did there would have been more of an impact on the city. In contrast, one illustrated a change of mind by saying that before Bridge Builders he/she did not want to come back to Memphis, but would now. One respondent was very hopeful about Bridge Builders, but reality--being in the program--caused a disappointment.

27. What changes would you recommend to strengthen Bridge Builders' positive effects?

In response to the question, "What changes would you recommend to strengthen Bridge Builders' positive effects?" respondents had numerous suggestions, most of which related to expanding the diversity of the participants and the program.

Concerning diversity, the respondents recommended its expansion: to do more to involve different students from different backgrounds; to base participation not just on race and school, but rather look at student interests and goals; to try to reach more inner-city youth within the school system as participants in summer conferences; to include students that are not so outstanding; and to try to involve different age groups (older) with the young. There was the comment not to involve the smartest people in school because they already knew what to do about race relationships. Others wanted the program to be extended to adults.

Concerning program content, the respondents suggested more of the following: sessions, people in the program, interesting and effective monthly meetings after the camps, organization, time for discussion ("we were always rushed"), small group activities, communication, participation in the program, community awareness, group community service activities--allowing more groups to join, activities to choose from, discussion of the solutions for the problems of Memphis, safety of meeting places, social activities, less classroom discussion and more interaction with each other, and real life problem solving. They also said that the program should be longer, lasting into college one person suggested.

Respondents suggested concerning follow-up: that Bridge Builders should not stop the earlier groups from meeting with the present ones; that second year members should have meetings so that they do not lose contact with one another; that the leadership improve the inclusion of "graduates" through additional contacts; and that the same service projects begun during camp be continued into the school year.

There also were comments about staff members, who were great to at least one respondent. Others thought that they should be of different ethnic backgrounds and not prejudiced, that they should be open to new ideas, and that there be a smaller student-counselor ratio. One wished that the leadership board would be in action again.

Negative comments were that Bridge Builders seemed to be like a social camp, that participants needed to take it more seriously, and that group interaction not be forced (i.e., assigning interracial roommates), but natural. To one person, many of the activities were less than satisfying because of their simplicity and the lack of appropriate targeting of the intended audiences. One suggested that the amount of

interaction be monitored because some did not stay with their assigned roommates, and were not trying to cooperate. Only one respondent cited no positive effects. Another quit participating soon after the formal program was over.

28. To what extent do you consider yourself a good leader?

In answering the question, "To what extent do you consider yourself a good leader?" respondents classified themselves from extremely good and "awesome" to "I am not a leader most of the time" and not at all. Many participants described their ability to be a leader as being very good. Others characterized themselves as being capable, dependable, and well rounded; some, as improving. Others said that they were quiet but effective leaders; some, by example; and some, by seeing a problem and asserting an opinion about it. Still others were followers, knowing also when to lead, even though Bridge Builders was seen by some to promote the role of active leadership.

One respondent said that "I am usually involved in a group that takes charge," and another, "Excellent! people look to me to guide them," but another that "I coordinate rather than dominate." Still another said, ". . . extremely good- because I can also take orders, " and another, ". . . good because I open my ears along with my mouth"; and another, ". . . not a 'born leader,' but I have developed skills."

Some qualified their abilities as a leader, such as being successful in a social setting, but only marginally so in an academic setting; or as leading where compelled to do so passionately; or as giving instructions and suggestions to others as well as being a great listener to the needs of others; or as being able to initiate ideas and goals that positively affect others.

A few gave Bridge Builders credit for progress toward being an effective leader by helping persons to express opinions and seeing their potential for leadership. Other results involved a participant seeing the need to develop confidence and voice volume, and another learning many skills that enabled the person to work successfully with people. Another was considered to be a good leader by refusing to compromise beliefs for anyone, regardless of the circumstances.

29. How has your understanding of cultural differences been affected by Bridge Builders' experiences?

Responses to the question, "How has your understanding of cultural differences been affected by Bridge Builders experiences?" varied from "affected greatly" to "it wasn't." Most left the program with a greater understanding of and more respect for persons of the opposite race, considering the experience to be enjoyable and educational. At least one did not stereotype others, and another was slower to conclude anything about a person until knowing the person. Several persons had enjoyable and educational experiences.

There was the belief that everyone really was not so different from others, that what differences were present were superficial, that although each race was unique there were many commonalities, that cultural differences were not so much greater

than the differences between individuals of the same race, that culture and race were completely different, and that proximity and interaction were the main factors in cultural differences, not racial origins. Differences were seen by one as making persons individuals.

Though some felt that all were similar, others noticed differences, such as races communicating in very different ways, being put into demanding situations that forced an examination of cultural differences, and a sharing of different perspectives. Some either left the program with a greater understanding of others and appreciated them more, or felt that the experience gave an edge to being a leader. For some, the experience " . . . helped make things I already knew more real," excited (them) about "the differences and wanted to learn more," made "my prejudice diminish," "took away assumptions," "greatly affected work practices," and helped to "really look in a different light."

Negative responses emphasized that there was little if any effect and that what was gained at the time of the program was not being used at the time of the response.

30. To what extent did the community service work improve your attitude toward other groups in the community?

Most respondents to the question, "To what extent did the community service work improve your attitude toward other groups in the community?" stated that their attitudes were improved. Others said it had the largest impact in the program and that it was essential to it. Some either became more involved with the community, learned that everyone was important, felt good and more fulfilled after community service and became a part of a bigger picture, or were made to feel a part of something useful. Others stated that they were either made see how blessed they really were, were taught me to be more positive, or had grown to love helping others.

Respondents stated that they were more fulfilled, felt useful, were more sensitive to the needs of others, became more positive, became more aware of community problems and efforts of community leaders to meet needs, and were strengthened and reinforced in what they were learning about others. One person thought that community service should be a requirement for all responsible citizens.

Others expressed their thoughts about it thusly: "The Community Service work is the best; I volunteer with different organizations"; "I thought of it not as charity but as a favor from one human to another"; "I saw the people as struggling through life just like I am struggling"; "I enjoyed it"; "It allowed me to think of others before myself"; and "It made me realize the difference one person can make, also a group." The experience helped to motivate one respondent to aid others in the community.

Specifically, community service helped participants: to depict the plight of many unfortunate people in their own communities, and allowed some to be more comfortable with others in the community; to learn that most people were in bad situations not because they wanted to be but because of unfortunate circumstances; that most homeless and poor did not choose to be; and to understand that things happened completely out of the control of community residents. Some realized that many who had been looked down on were as intelligent as the participants, but that

they were separated through unfortunate socioeconomic situations.

Several stated that they developed more compassion for the mentally and physically challenged, children, and the elderly. Another learned about the positive things that could happen in areas of Memphis deemed to be unsafe. A more concrete result was that one participant decided to earn both a baccalaureate and master's degree in social work.

For only a few, community service had little effect because they were either already willing to work with others, were already working with others, or failed to realize anything that they were not previously aware of. With one on whom community service had little effect, there became awareness but not much modification of behavior.

Conclusions from the Data Analysis

The data received revealed the respondents' perceptions of their own experiences.

Concerning the Variable Race

The data analysis indicated that there were differences in responses to questions 9-23 when race was considered. Responses to items 10, 13, 17, and 21, which could be gathered together under a rubric labeled interaction, were significantly different, as were items 15 and 23, dealing with leadership views and skills, and item 12, dealing with community involvement. The impact of the program was perceived to be greater by African American students than by European American students.

The data also revealed that there were no differences between the groups on the items dealing with racial matters (items 9, 16, 18, and 20) . This is an important conclusion inasmuch as the purpose of the program was to foster racial harmony and cooperation. A similar level of understanding inferred an absence of tension among the participants. If all participants perceived the impact in essentially the same light, there was the possibility that there was less friction and more cooperation in achieving the goals of the ongoing programs.

Concerning the Variable Age

Respondents who were younger (15-21), were more likely to seek social contact with other races and to develop friendships with members of other races than those who were in the older group of participants. This could have occurred because members of the younger group had had fewer friendship ties because of their ages, had had fewer experiences with persons of an opposite race, were still forming opinions about the basis for friendships, or were more cooperative in seeking to fulfill the objectives of the program. Age differences had nothing to do with interrelationships, community involvement, other racial matters, teamwork, leadership, and gender bias.

Concerning the Variable Period in the Program

Respondents in the program during the last five years were significantly different from those in the first five years of the program on items relating to race (9 and 20), community involvement (item 12), and goals (item 17), teamwork (item 21), and leadership (item 22). This might imply that as larger groups were involved in the program that more relationships were possible, thus creating the opportunity for differences to occur. By the beginning of this last five-year period, knowledge of previous programs' content could have been known and expectations met. This cumulative information could have inspired a desire to meet and exceed the effectiveness of previous programs and could have been enough of a motivation to produce some differences. It would be unrealistic to expect that each group of participants was effected equally by the program activities.

The data analysis also revealed that there were no differences among participants relating to other types of interactions, other racial relationships, gender bias, other issues about community service, and other leadership matters related to period of time in the program.

Concerning the Variable Job Category

There were differences among the professional /vocational choices in regard to the improvement of interaction with others and overcoming stereotypical attitudes towards other races. The data analysis also revealed that there were no differences among participants relating to other types of interactions, other racial relationships, gender bias, community service, and leadership matters.

Conclusions from the Comments

Several conclusions were evident from the comments of the respondents:

1. There was agreement that the program was highly effective and that it brought about positive changes in the participants.

2. There were numerous suggestions about changing the program to be more effective, which connoted a belief that the suggestions were both welcome and would be heeded by program directors.

3. Several suggestions were made about continuing the involvement of participants beyond the formal program, such as an organization like an alumni group.

4. Present in answers to each question was the belief that, while one person could accomplish a great deal, group efforts to solve problems were necessary for success.

5. There was a hope that race relations could be improved in Memphis, especially by young people who did not have the biases and prejudices that adults possessed.

6. One of the most effective parts of the program was the community service, which informed participants about problems in the city, and helped them to become concerned about them and dedicated to their resolution.

7. An understanding of cultural differences was achieved by many in the program, but others thought that people were more similar than different.

8. Several thought that the Bridge Builders program should be made available to more young people and be longer lasting.

9. Most participants considered themselves to be good leaders, others qualifying their leadership effectiveness either in relation to situational opportunities or as being effective followers.

10. Students chosen for the program were leaders who learned a great deal about community problems, modified their beliefs about the presence of equality in society, served willingly in service projects outside their communities, and realized that equality of opportunity was necessary to effect a positive community.

11. Many achieved a greater understanding and respect for persons of the opposite race, mostly through program opportunities and community service projects.

12. Students were empathetic towards persons living in dire circumstances, some developing strong sensibilities to their plight.

13. Negative responses to the questions were few, sometimes pessimistic about the purposes and achievements of the program. A few persons indicated little that they made little progress through the program because of previous experiences with other racial groups.

Discussion

The program has been perceived to be successful in endeavoring to provide participants with skills for leadership during the camp experiences and the monthly meetings. Respondents expressed a high degree of satisfaction with these events and urged that a broader population be involved for longer periods of time in them. The program has been perceived to be successful in exposing youth to cultures that differ significantly from their own, as evidenced by comments about their naivete about the presence of racial differences in Memphis. Perhaps the strongest comments were reserved for that phase of the program that exposed the participants to community needs through their involvement in active community service projects: they were singularly affected by what they saw and experienced. There was no indication that students were placed in summer employment programs.

The program seems to have achieved its desired outcomes successfully.

Respondents believed strongly that it improved their leadership skills (item 15: a mean of 3.946 and a 70.5% reaction of reasonable extent to great extent of impact; also item 23: a mean of 3.8 and a 65.6 % reaction of reasonable extent and great extent). They were affected positively in their understanding, tolerance, and appreciation of differences of races (item 9: a mean of 3.507, and a 43.9 % reaction of reasonable extent and great extent; item 16: a mean of 3.919 and 71.8% reaction of reasonable extent and great extent; item 18: a mean of 4.060 and a 72.5% reaction to reasonable extent and great extent; and item 20: a mean of 3.777 and a reaction of 60.8% reaction of reasonable extent and great extent). There was less impact on gender (item 14: a mean of 3.407 and only a 50.7% agreement about reasonable extent and great extent of effect) and culture. Participants were less successful in being involved in solving community problems, and in demonstrating skills to solve problems in their communities(item 12: a mean of 3.327, and 46.7 % reaction to reasonable extent and great extent; and item 22: a mean of 3.265 and a 42.3% of reaction to reasonable extent and great extent). Both of these items ranked lowest in mean and extent of impact on the list of 15. Again, age, experience, the absence of a career, and continuation in college might prohibit growth in this area.

Responses indicated that satisfaction with the program was high and that participants are benefiting now from their experiences, but to a limited extent. There is anticipation that the effect of the program would increasingly impact the community through community leaders and business leaders who would make decisions based on an understanding and appreciation of different cultures, and community and business leaders who would work or serve in a diverse community environment. Many of the respondents are probably still in college or are at the beginning of their careers. One of the lower means on the questionnaire was present involvement in community service. In another ten years, the impact of their participation should be greater and, therefore, more measurable. It is likely, however, that they are even now able to work more effectively than before in a diverse environment, given the changes over time that have affected the percentages of racial minorities and women who have moved into managerial positions in the work force. To maintain employment, persons must recognize the rights of others and respect their uniqueness, concepts that likely were reinforced in this program.

Recommendations

A primary recommendation is that Bridges, Inc. form an alumni group and maintain contact with the former participants through a newsletter, or WEB page, establish a chat time on the Internet, and then reassess the effect of the program after a large number of the participants have had the opportunity to establish themselves in careers, become involved in community activities, and emerge as leaders in various types of organizations.

Another recommendation is that the current leadership effect changes in the program, suggested by the respondents, that are reasonable, possible, and in keeping with the mission of Bridge Builders. Although there is a high amount of satisfaction with the results of the previous program, the number of suggestions elicited by the survey

implies that phases of it should be modified.

A further recommendation is that Bridges, Inc. consider extending the program to a broader group of students, possibly including younger participants and those who are not necessarily identified as leaders in their schools. The continuance of the problems identified by this program implies that larger numbers of persons should be involved in their solution and that earlier involvement might bring about significant changes in the community sooner. The recommendation also implies a high degree of satisfaction with the program and a belief in its being effective with an even younger group of students. Confidence in the format, staff, and activities implies that the program be replicated in other settings.

BRIDGE BUILDERS IMPACT

November 30, 1997

Dear Former Bridge Builder:

The Bridge Builders program is now ten years old, and we want to celebrate that event by announcing the impact of the program on the participants. The attached instrument was devised to gather data. It involves responding on the Scantron form (biographical information and a set of answers) and writing short answers to a set of questions.

We would appreciate your completing the instrument it and returning it as soon as you can. Results will be tabulated and reported to all who respond through a newsletter we will publish.

Please use the enclosed envelope for returning the Scantron form and Part 3 of the instrument.

Sincerely,

John R. Petry, Ed. D.
Evaluator

PART 1

PLEASE WRITE IN YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER UNDER THE ID SECTION OF THE SCANTRON FORM AND THEN FILL IN THE BUBBLE ON THE SCANTRON FORM THAT CORRESPONDS TO YOUR ANSWER TO EACH ITEM.

Social Security Number_____

1. Gender: (a)_____Female; (b)_____Male

2. Race: (a)_____African-American; (b)_____Asian-American; (c)_____European-American; (d)_____Hispanic-American; (e)_____Native American

3. Age: (a)_____17-20; (b)_____21-25; (c)_____25 and above

4. Education: (a)_____High School; (b)_____Some College; (c)_____College Graduate

5. Vocation/profession: (a)_____Business; (b)_____Clergy; (c)_____Communications; (d)_____Education; (e) _____None of the above

6. Vocation/profession: (a)_____Entertainment; (b)_____Government; (c)_____Industry; (d)_____Law; (e) _____None of the above

7. Vocation/Profession: (a)_____Medicine; (b)_____Social Work; (c) _____Other vocation (d)_____ Other profession; (e)_____ None of the above

8. The Period of Your Participation: _____1988-1992; _____1993-1997

PART 2

FOR EACH ITEM BELOW PLEASE FILL IN THE BUBBLE ON THE SCANTRON FORM THAT CORRESPONDS TO YOUR ANSWER: A-E: VERY LITTLE EFFECT TO GREAT EFFECT.

_____9. To what extent do you seek social contact with people of other races?

_____10. To what extent did Bridge Builders activities develop a sense of group interdependence?

_____11. To what extent do you regularly interact with people from other groups?

_____12. To what extent was your community involvement increased by Bridge Builders?

_____13. To what extent did your overall ability to interact with others effectively improve?

_____14. To what extent did Bridge Builders activities reduce gender bias?

_____15. To what extent did your participation in Bridge Builders improve your leadership skills?

_____16. To what extent did your level of trust in persons of other races improve?

_____17. To what extent did Bridge Builders activities help all individuals develop a common goal?

____18. To what extent were you able to overcome stereotypes of other racial groups?

____19. To what extent has your willingness to interact with people from other groups increased?

____20. To what extent did you develop friendships with those of other racial groups?

____21. To what extent did Bridge Builders activities help you understand teamwork?

____22. To what extent are you currently involved in community service?

____23. To what extent were your views about leadership affected by Bridge Builders?

PART 3

PLEASE GIVE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION BY WRITING ON THIS PAGE YOUR RESPONSES TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS. DETACH AND RETURN WITH THE SCANTRON FORM.

24. How was your view of racial problems in Memphis affected?

25. What about Bridge Builders produced the most positive and longest lasting effect in your life?

26. To what extent were your hopes for the future of Memphis affected?

27. What changes would you recommend to strengthen Bridge Builder's positive effects?

28. To what extent do you consider yourself a good leader?

29.How was your understanding of cultural differences affected by Bridge Builders experiences?

30. To what extent did the community service work improve your attitude toward other groups in the community?

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THIS SURVEY. YOUR ANSWERS WILL HELP TO DETERMINE THE IMPACT OF THIS PROGRAM ON FORMER PARTICIPANTS.